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"THE MERRY MONTH."

"HAIL, Bounteous May that dost inspire mirth and youth;" "May, the merry month;" "May, that mother is of monethes glad;" May of the "darling buds"; May of the "welcome flowers"! The poets have certainly outdone themselves to be nice to May!

From earliest times May seems to have been regarded by all Latin and Germanic peoples as the happiest month of the year, the month of merriment and revel. Its jaunty little name, which suggests blitheness and gaiety, it gets from Maia, Latin goddess of fertility and growth. From April 28 to May 2 the Romans celebrated their Floralia, a feast consecrated to Flora, the flower goddess. Gay costumes, dancing, dramatic performances and a distinct loosening of decorum are known to have marked these rites. This was undoubtedly the rude and boisterous origin of the seemlier May Day festivities of modern times.

In the Middle Ages the celebration narrowed down to the actual first day of the month, and "bringing in the May" became a regular spring festival. An important feature of this celebration in Medieval times was the beginning of our almost forgotten custom of hanging May baskets. The young men sallied forth the night before into the forest and brought back branches, bushes and flowers which they planted in streets in front of the houses of their lady loves.

Also it became usual to bring back one tall straight tree, stripped of its boughs, which was set up in the middle of the green or market place, painted, bedecked and beribboned, and straightway made the centre of all the dancing and merriment. This was, of course, the Maye Pole—that frivolous, sinful, device of the devil so frowned upon by the Puritans, which the godly Deacon John Stubbs referred to as that "stinckyng idol" about which the people "leape and daunce as the heathen did." When the Puritans got their chance they abolished it with zeal.

On May 1, 1661, however, after the restoration of the gay Stuart king, the London populace showed their delight at escaping from the gloomy square toes by erecting in a conspicuous part of the Strand an enormous cedar May Pole 134 feet high, covered with gilt crowns and gorgeous paraphernalia. This May Pole of May Poles stood, one of the sights of London, until 1717, when, having grown old and decayed, it was sold to Sir Isaac Newton, who took it down and used it as a support for his great telescope at Wanstead.

The Queen of the May was a survival of the Roman habit of having a living flower-crowned representative of the Goddess Flora. Usually, in later times, this was a live girl selected for her good looks, but sometimes in England and France elaborately dressed dolls served the purpose.

Milkmaids were especially given to celebrating the day in fantastic dresses, going about town with a flower-decked cow, and dancing around the animal to the sound of violin or clarinet. May Day in Medieval England was in fact one of the great public holidays for all classes.

Yet with all its reputation for fun and frolic the month of May was regarded, even in Roman times, as an unlucky month to be married. This was mainly because of the Lemuria or festival of the unhappy dead, which occurred on the 9th, 11th and 15th.

We find the poet Ovid saying:

If proverbs weigh with you, people say that May is the month to marry bad wives.

Marry in May
Repent all way

the English saw has it.

And in spite of its beauty and its promise of summer our wise ancestors realized that after all May is very much of a spring month and that cold treachery often lurks beneath its smiles.

Change not a clout
Till May be out

is still sound advice as to light clothing.

Other old sayings, such as:

A cold May and a windy
Makes a full barn and a findy.

A hot May makes a fat church yard.

A leaky May and a hot June
Keeps the puir man's head abune;

and the Spanish proverb:

Rain in May makes bread for the whole year,

all prove that May has never been all warmth and sunshine.

Celebrations of the gay month and its opening day have badly fallen off since the old days of "Merrie England." It is curious to find our own Washington Irving early the last century lamenting that

"the rural dance on the green and the homely May Day pageant have gradually disappeared in proportion as the peasantry have become expensive and artificial in their pleasures and too knowing for simple enjoyment. Some attempts indeed have been made of late years by men of both taste and learning to rally back the popular feeling to these standards of primitive simplicity; but the time has gone by—the feeling has become chilled by habits of gain and traffic—the country apes the manners and amusements of the town, and little is heard of May Day at present except from the lamentations of authors, who sigh after it from among the brick walls of the city."

Must all times sigh for the "old times"?

Letters from the People

A "Special Official."

To the Editor of The Evening World:

Dear Sir: Regarding your able editorials on the Titanic, it might be well if Congress should enforce the maritime law to prevent a repetition of such a disaster by appointing a special officer on board of American transatlantic steamships, with authority to act in the proper safeguarding of passengers and crews on the high seas. Also forbidding fleet monster passenger ships to leave ports until they are fitted with searchlights, sufficient lifeboats, rafts, collapsible boats, lifebuoys and life-saving apparatus to accommodate all on board. I am sure the House Committee on Merchant Marine could at once get to work on legislation to prevent, if possible, any more accidents due to inadequate safety appliances. And if we should lead the way other nations would soon adopt the same precaution.

J. DIMMONT.

Can You Beat It?

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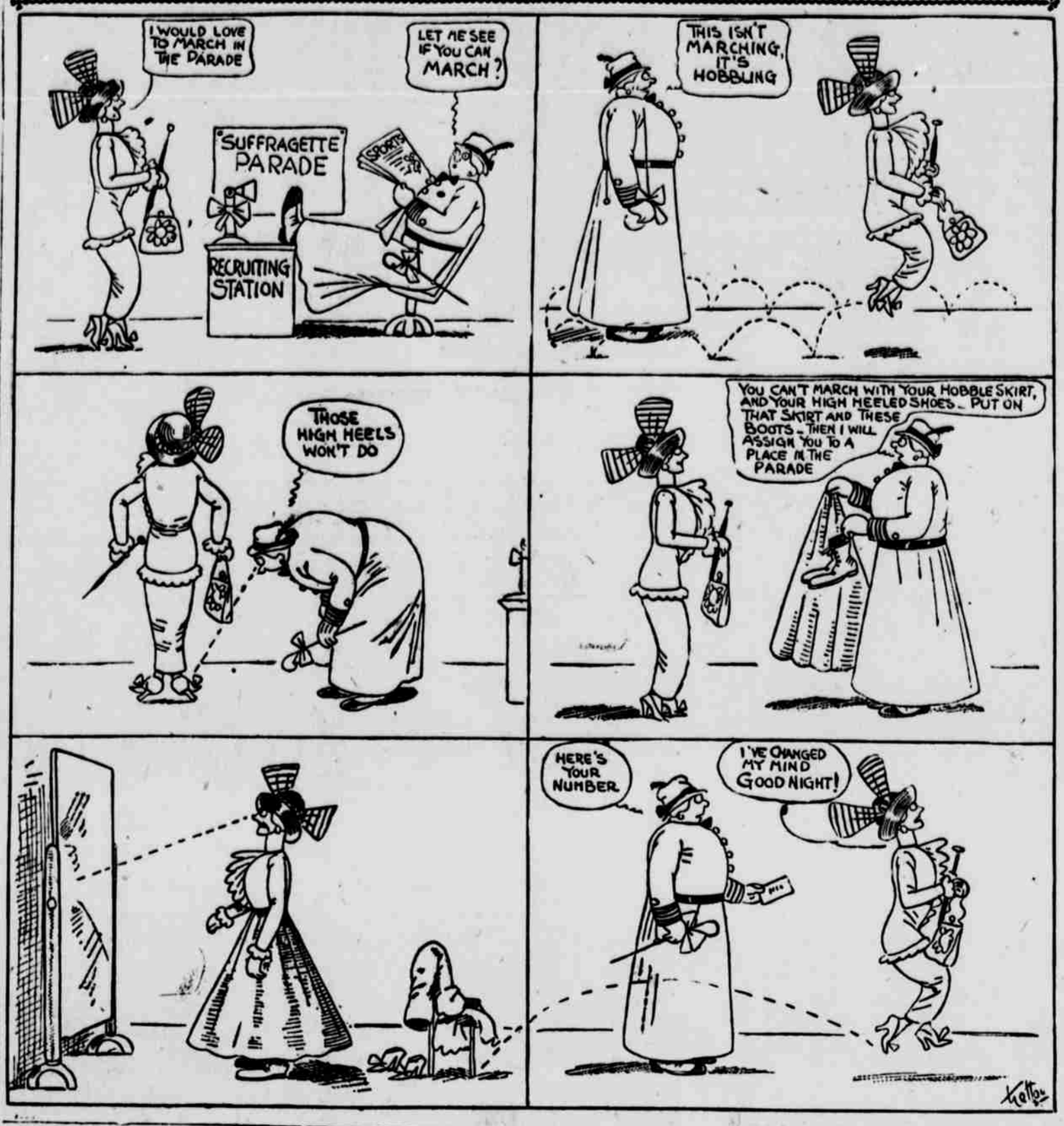
By Maurice Ketten



The Jarr Family

By Roy L. McCardell

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"NOW, I think it will be real nice to invite some friends in this evening," said Mrs. Jarr to Mrs. Jenkins. "It isn't often we have the pleasure of entertaining you, and I'd like you to meet some of our friends."

"I think that would be real sweet, ventured the lady from East Malaria. "You won't have them to come to dinner, though?"

"No; I'll just call up Mrs. Rangle and Clara Mudridge-Smith on the telephone and ask them to come over after dinner."

"Isn't it about time those men got home?" asked Mrs. Jenkins. "Mr. Jarr didn't forget to tell my husband I was taking dinner with you, did he?"

"Oh, I feel sure he told him, and he and Mr. Jenkins may be here any minute. Probably they are coming now. Will you look out of the window for them? I want to give my maid a hand setting the table."

"I don't wish to seem too anxious about Mr. Jenkins. We had a few words yesterday," explained Mrs. Jenkins. "A man only imposes on you if you give in first, and he'd be sure to think I was giving in if he saw me watching for him."

This was where Mrs. Jenkins made a mistake. Had she been looking from the window she might have seen Mr. Jenkins being called into Gus's place as he emerged from the subway with the rose bushes he was carrying home to East Malaria by way of Harlem.

She might also have observed Mr. Jarr going into Gus's. But as she didn't watch she didn't know that the two were in the man-trap on the corner. Pending their arrival, Mrs. Jarr telephoned her friends.

Then the ladies sat waiting for the men, while the dinner waited, too; as did Gertrude, the light-running domestic, who had an engagement to go to see the new moving picture, "The Hand of Fate!" Gertrude was a moving picture first-nighter, because Claude, her fireman beau, could get her in to see them for nothing. She asked Mrs. Jarr to excuse her.

"Should we telephone Mrs. Rangle and Mrs. Smith not to come?" asked Mrs. Jenkins, nervously, as the clock struck eight.

"What excuse can we give?" asked Mrs. Jarr. "And they may be here any moment now, and we haven't had dinner. Let us eat before they come, and never mind our husbands."

"I'm so angry I couldn't touch a bite!" declared Mrs. Jenkins. "And I'll never forgive that man Jenkins for this as long as I live!"

"We'll have to speak to them if they come while visitors are here," said Mrs. Jarr. "That Mrs. Rangle is the greatest gossip, and she just delights to have something like that to talk about!"

"I wish Mr. Jarr hadn't taken Mr. Jenkins off somewhere. Now I'll have to go out to East Malaria alone!" whined Mrs. Jenkins.

"Mr. Jarr wouldn't do such a thing!" replied Mrs. Jarr, loyally. "I'm afraid Mr. Jenkins is keeping him. You said you were not speaking to your husband. It's bad enough when people quarrel who are old enough to know better without making trouble for other people."

"Mr. Jenkins never drank a drop until he went to work in that office with YOUR husband!" retorted Mrs. Jenkins.

"It's too bad he should have begun then. He was old enough to know better!" said Mrs. Jarr. "Fortunately, MY husband doesn't drink."

Mrs. Jenkins glared at her hostess, and there is no telling what she might have replied, but just then the doorbell rang. It wasn't the missing husbands, however. It was Mrs. Rangle and Mrs. Mudridge-Smith.

Mrs. Rangle declared she couldn't stay but a moment, as Mr. Rangle was working late at the office that evening, and her girl was out and she would have to return to get supper.

"I'd let him get his own supper! I don't believe that 'late at the office' story!" said Mrs. Jarr, shortly.

Mrs. Rangle was too tactful to ask where Mr. Jarr was. She simply smiled and said it was a good thing not to be too inquisitive after one was married.

Mrs. Mudridge-Smith was affability itself to Mrs. Jenkins. She took an attitude toward the wives of her husband's employees as a wealthy and charitably disposed woman should toward the worthy poor. That is, she took this attitude to all except Mrs. Jarr. Mrs. Jarr knew too much about Clara Mudridge-Smith.

But the boss's bride edified the others for some time by discoursing on who was divorced, who was getting divorces, and who would marry each other when various divorces in high life, now under way, were obtained.

"Did you hear about the Divorce Club?" she asked. "You pay a dollar a week when you join, and every week lots are drawn to see who can secure the services of the Divorce Club's lawyer and the expense fund."

"Where is this club?" asked all the other ladies, eagerly.

"The Country Mouse Visits Her City Cousin"—In the Jarr Flat

Which?

"The law against people making a living by feats of guesswork hits him pretty hard."

"What is he? A fortune teller or a doctor?"

Reflections of a Bachelor Girl

By Helen Rowland

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PLATONIC friendship is NOT a failure; it is the most delightful state of intoxicating uncertainty in the whole love-game.

That look of glad surprise with which a girl receives a man's proposal, after she has spent six months at hard labor bringing him to it, is the feat of her life.

Don't try to bring a man's love back, because once Love has been conquered he is the kind of ex-champion that never "comes back."

A whole harem wouldn't keep a modern man in the house once he has heard the call of the wild any more than a string of horses will keep him in the stable once he has heard the toot of an automobile.

Solomon had time to look after seven hundred wives, but then he didn't have a motor car to absorb him, nor a stenographer to distract him.

A wife receives her greatest shock on the day that she suddenly wakes up to discover that her husband has changed from the "Now-I-lay-me-down-for-you-to-walk-over" attitude to the "You-stay-there-'till-I-come-back" attitude.

Just about the time that a bachelor has become so bitter and cynical that life doesn't seem worth living, a new girl comes along and he decides that after all he'll postpone marriage or suicide for a few years more.

This is the time of the year when a wife begins to wonder which of the three B's she dreads most, blonde, baseball or beer gardens.

Most men love wisely—and too many—to love well.

Queer Signs.

SIGNS seen in Boston, according to the Transcript: Placard at a moving picture show: "Young children must have parents." In a barber shop window: "During alterations patrons will be shaved in the back." Sign in a Tremont street store: "Empty boxes—suitable for Christmas gifts." In a tailor's shop: "We dye for others; why not let us dye for you?" In a clothing store: "These pants will look better on your legs than on our hands." A silversmith has a place next door to a restaurant. The former having put up a placard, "Jewelry of all kinds plated," the restaurant keeper followed with this: "Oysters and little neck clams plated."

HISTORIC HEARTBREAKERS

By Albert Payson Terhune.

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43.—ALEXANDRE DUMAS, Genius and Lover.

A SWARTHY, shame-faced boy was hauled forth from under a shed where he had been hiding. He had hidden there for three days to avoid being sent to a seminary to prepare himself for the priesthood. He had no distaste for the seminary, but his sweetheart, Celia Deviolaine, had objected to his going there. Thus, for the first of many hundred times during his strange life, a girl influenced the career of Alexandre Dumas.

Dumas was a French quadroon. His mulatto father had been a general under Napoleon, and his grandmother had been a full-blooded San Domingo negress. The boy was brought up after his father's death in shabby genteel poverty. He was shaped by circumstances to be an obscure clerk or artisan. But he had a soul of fire and an ambition that nothing could satisfy. Without a penny, without an influential friend, he took the world by the throat and wrested from it not only fortune but deathless fame.

At twenty-one he threw over his job as a provincial notary's clerk and came to Paris to make his fortune. He secured a Government position at $250 a year. He at once began to write plays. To gain the right sort of hearing for his work, the influence of the famous litterateur, Nodier, was needful. Nodier would not see him. Dumas made such an impression on Nodier's daughter, Marie, that she interceded for him with her father and won him the opportunity he sought.

After a baffling fight against ill luck, Dumas began to score a success as a playwright. In the early stages of his struggle at Paris he met Marie Catherine Lebay, a seamstress, who fell in love with him and whose influence over his wild nature was for a time very strong. (Their son, Alexandre Dumas the younger, wrote "Camille" and many other powerful books and plays.)

Love and Fame.

Tiring of the gentle seamstress, Dumas discarded her and at once had a fervid but unhappy love affair with a woman of whom he spoke as "Melanie W."—and whose final rejection of him almost broke his heart.

But Marie Dorval, leading actress at the Porte St. Martin Theatre, drove away the sad memory. She adored Dumas. It was largely due to her that his first successful play was produced. And she was of great help to him in his later work.

Far different was Ida Ferrier, a pretty second rate actress whom Dumas married in 1840. He lived in misery with Ida. She was jealous; she was extravagant; she disturbed him at his work. She would not let his son, Alexandre, enter the house. Dumas, after a few turbulent years, got rid of her.

Now that he had reached the acme of his fame as a playwright, Dumas turned to novel writing. He ground out his work in systematic fashion, writing from 7 A. M. to 7 P. M., and covering exactly twenty huge sheets of paper each day. For instance, one day in 1844 he finished "Monte Cristo" on the fifteenth sheet of his twenty page daily task. And, without pausing a minute, he picked up another sheet of paper, scrawled the words "The Three Musketeers" across the top of it and wrote the first five pages of that glorious book before he ceased from the day's toil.

"Monte Cristo" and "The Three Musketeers" ran as serials in a daily newspaper during 1844. Dumas thus originated the "newspaper serial story." Each day, throngs would wait in the street to seize the first copies of the paper and follow the adventures of d'Artagnan and Edmond Dantes.

Dumas found himself the most idolized man in France. He had an income of more than $50,000 a year from his writings (an almost unheard of sum in those days). And he spent it like a drunken sailor. His friends helped themselves to his gold pieces by the handful. He lavished fortunes on the women who cared for him. He built a large theatre. That was a failure. He built a garish castle—and could not pay for it.

The Downfall.

Then hard times set in. The Revolution of 1848 marred his fortunes. Money ran short. Debts ran high. Dumas had always used the services of unknown collaborators. Now, for pay, he signed his famous name to any story, poem or essay that other people had written and had brought to him for his signature. The market was flooded with "Dumas books" that Dumas had not written, nor even read. He founded newspapers, then abandoned them as failures. He even, for money, stood on exhibition in a shop window. Evil days were come upon him.

When our civil war broke out Dumas sent President Lincoln a large sum of money and a hundred autographed mottoes to be sold for the benefit of Union soldiers' widows. He even planned to come here and write an American novel. In 1859 he won the hero-worship of Emilie Cordier, a girl young enough to be his daughter. They used to go on cruises together, Emilie clad as a boy and always addressing Dumas as "papa." In his very last days shortly before his death in 1870 there was still another spectacular love affair.

To the very end Dumas retained the gay charm and dashing gallantry that had from boyhood made him irresistible. He was one of the world's master-geniuses. A man whose very faults—and there surely were enough of them—were lovable.

The Day's Good Stories

Probably Got Off.

APROPOS of certain unfounded charges of drunkenness among the naval cadets at Annapolis, Admiral Dewey, at a dinner in Washington, told a story about a young sailor.

"The sailor, after a long voyage," he said, "went ashore in the tropics, and it being a hot day, he drank, in certain tropical bars, too much beer," says the Chicago Journal.

"As the sailor lurched under his heavy load along a palm-bordered avenue, his captain hailed him indignantly.

"'Look here,' the captain said, 'suppose you were my commander, and you met me in such a condition as you're in now, what would you do to me?'

"'Well, sir,' said the sailor, 'I wouldn't condescend to take no notice of you at all, sir.'"

A Willing Worker.

"DRIVE like the deuce!" shouted Smith, springing into the taxi.

With a lurch the car darted forward, and away they went like lightning through the city. Crash! They took off the wheel of a passing wagon.

Hi! hi! They missed flattening out a small child by two-inches of a hair. Clang! They upset a milk cart. People shouted, constables impotently held up their hands as the taxi dashed up one street and down another, taking corners on two wheels and threatening every lamppost with destruction.

At last, after half an hour's furious racing, they slowed up in a narrow thoroughfare and Smith poked his head out of the window.

"Are we nearly there?" he asked breathlessly.

The chauffeur turned in his seat and shouted: "Where did you want to go, sir?"—Answers.

The May Manton Fashions

Pattern 7423—Costume for Misses and Small Women.

EVERY variation of the belted or Russian idea is smart this season. This costume can be made available for linen, lingerie materials, taffeta and for lightweight wools. The skirt is made in two pieces and there is an inverted plait at each side that extends to the depth of the flouncing. The little blouse coatee is quite separate and closed as the front. Made with square neck and short sleeves and of embroidered or other fancy material the costume is adapted to afternoon wear and to luncheons and occasions of the kind. Made with high neck and long sleeves and from plain linen or pique, simply finished, it becomes suited to morning wear.

For the 16-year size will be required 4 1-2 yards of material 27, 4 yards 36, 3 3-4 yards 44 inches wide with 2 1-2 yards of embroidery 12 inches wide and 3 1-4 yards of tucking, 3 yards of banding; 1-2 yard 18 inches wide for yoke when high neck is used.

Pattern No. 7423 is cut in sizes for misses of 16 and 18 years of age.

How to Obtain These Patterns.

Call at THE EVENING WORLD MAY MANTON FASHION BUREAU, Donald Building, 100 West Thirty-second Street (opposite Gimbel Bros.), corner Sixth Avenue and Thirty-second Street, New York, or sent by mail on receipt of ten cents in coin or stamps for each pattern ordered.

IMPORTANT—Write your address plainly and always specify size wanted. Add two cents for letter postage if in a hurry.